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C O N F I D E N T I A L TASHKENT 001935

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [UZ](#)

SUBJECT: KARIMOV GIVES SPEECH TO LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY
CONGRESS

REF: A. TASHKENT 1932

[1](#)B. TASHKENT 1877

[1](#)C. TASHKENT 1843 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Poloff Tim Buckley for reasons 1.4 (B, D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. There were several press reports on November 7 confirming that the Liberal Democratic Party of Uzbekistan (LDPU) formally nominated President Karimov as its candidate for President, however there is still no formal indication that he accepted the nomination. Karimov did personally attend the party congress and delivered a speech in which he stated the nomination "is a great honor" and "a big responsibility for me". He also prefaced that his remarks would focus on "future policies, tomorrow, and the fate of the people of Uzbekistan" rather than on candidates. One article noted that Karimov provided a definitive answer to an LDPU participant's question about 2008 tax policy. This may indicate that he intends to remain at the helm. Meanwhile, it was reported that a rival party official also plans to vote for Karimov. Post continues to watch for indications of whether the GOU will address the issue of Constitutional term limits before the November 11 deadline for establishing candidates. End summary.

[1](#)2. (C) The LDPU apparently moved the date of its congress ahead by one day in order to maintain secrecy and invited only party delegates and selected media. According to press reports, the LDPU, the largest party in Uzbekistan, unanimously decided to nominate President Karimov on November 6 (see reftel A). Karimov, who personally attended the party congress, delivered a speech in which he thanked the LDPU members for their trust. Although he did not officially accept the nomination, he noted the nomination "is a great honor" and "it is a big responsibility for me as well." He further sidestepped whether he was accepting the nomination by emphasizing that his remarks would focus on "future policies, tomorrow, and the fate of the people of Uzbekistan" rather than on candidates. News reports noted the speech was identical to the definitive progress report previously delivered to the August 30 joint meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers, both chambers of Parliament, and the Apparatus in which he discussed accomplishments since independence and future policy priorities.

[1](#)3. (SBU) One LDPU delegate apparently asked Karimov a question about a future tax rate, to which Karimov responded that the single tax rate for entrepreneurs will be lowered from the current 10 percent to eight percent next year. An

article in the independent uznews.net commented that this definitive answer was a "slip of the tongue" by a person "who is absolutely sure about his future and his place in it."

¶4. (SBU) A separate story in uznews.net, which is critical of the GOU, reported that a member of the rival People's Democratic Party of Uzbekistan told the media he planned to vote for Karimov rather than the party's own candidate, Asliddin Rustamov. The article quoted the unnamed party official as saying Karimov "enjoys indisputable authority among people" and that he "is a guarantor of stability for many people."

¶5. (C) Comment: Karimov appears to be easing into the election picture one step at a time, and his remarks to the LDPU congress upon his nomination indicate he is indeed accepting the nomination. An official confirmation of his acceptance may follow once the news about the nomination has been widely digested. As the November 11 deadline for establishing the candidates fast approaches it is still uncertain whether Karimov will directly address the constitutional term limit issue or whether it will simply be ignored. The emerging picture - no surprise - is that of a carefully stage-managed election by a government determined somehow to avoid the stinging international rebukes of past ballots.

NORLAND